

# critical digest

139 East 47 St. NY 17 NY  
EL 5-6894 T. M. Kraus



July 18, 1956 Vol VIII No 20 The Weekly NYC Theatre Newsletter \$25 year \$6.50 quarter

## Next Week

Taming of the Shrew-East Side Amphi-Theatre-Thursdays & Fridays from July 27 to August 17. East River Drive and Grand St.

## Summer Debuts

Eleventh Hour play by Kermit Hunter at Gypsy Hill, Va. Theatre July 21.

No Rest for the Weary-play by Adrian Gordon at White Barn, Conn. July 15.

Welcome Darlings-revue with Tallulah Bankhead, Westport, Conn. July 16

Great Gesture-play by Rodolfo Usigli at Medford, Mass July 21.

## Off Broadway

Hotel Excelsior-Provincetown Aug 1. New play by Hans Holzer.

## Digests of Comments on Summer Shows

Sticks and Stones- the revue with Hermione Gingold started its pre-Broadway tour at John Drew Theatre, East Hampton, NY with a pair of split notices. Herridge, Post, found it an enjoyable evening. Supporting cast of new faces was also praised by Post drama editor who suggested star's final song should be cut. Peper, World Telegram-Sun, okayed show as pleasant enough entertainment for the summer barns, but fears Broadway will demand much more... Beasops Fables-revue with Beatrice Lillie needs some major bolstering and revision, suggests Hobe, Variety, after viewing at Andover, NJ. Second part of show is big league entertainment, but first part, he notes, is merely good touring stuff for the strawhat trail.

The Lesser Comores-new comedy by Albert Russon tried out at New Hope, Pa. is basically a pretty good story that would need major surgery for a NY try, comments Ward, Variety... The Real Me-new comedy by Hamilton Wright which debuted at Sharon, Conn, has jolly, hilarious moments, but generally suffers from inept writing, acting and direction, pans Eck, Variety.

Henry V- revived at Cambridge, Mass, Drama Festival, was cheered by Funke, Times, as a worthy production in spite of its unevenness and its poetic deficits. Douglas Watson, in the title role, presents a respectable Henry, one always worth watching because of its honesty and dignity. Comic scenes fail, critic added.

Baby Doe-an opera by Douglas Moore presented at Central City, Colo, Opera House was recommended by Chapman, News, as a fine, original music drama. Book by John Latouche, music and lyrics by Douglas Moore were both rated as solid contributions to the contemporary musical stage. Martha Lipton took the singing honors. Michael Myerberg is considering presenting it on Broadway. Hanya Holm and Edwin Levy directed. If the authors will consent to the use of spoken dialogue in place of recitative, the popularity of the work will be enhanced without harming its quality as a fine, original music drama, critic suggested.

Next season NYC theatre goers will visit the Bijou and the Ambassador, two former legit houses which have been returned to the fold. The Bijou has been leased by Carmen Capalbo and Stanley Chase, Three Penny Opera producers, who will present a season of limited-run dramas at the small house. The Ambassador, used in recent years for TV, will open Oct 2 with The Loud Red Patrick starring David Wayne and Arthur Kennedy. There is also a report that Loew's State may be converted to a legit theatre.

### Plays

Desk Set and Janus closed. . . Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter moved to Shubert. . . Too Late The Phalarope opens Oct 11 at Broadhurst starring Barry Sullivan. . . Harbor Lights debuts Oct 4 at Belasco. . . City Center drama season opens Nov 7. . . Sixth Finger in a Five Finger Glove is proper title of new Scott Michel play opening Oct 3 at Longacre. . . Richard Ney will produce Too Little Time For Love, a musical by the British actor, on Broadway next winter.

### Players

Edith Adams signed for Daisy Mae role in L'il Abner. . . Walter Pidgeon will star in The Happiest Millionaire, which has been sold to MGM for \$250,000. . . Linda Darnell makes NY debut in Harbor Lights. . . Mary McCarty replaces Margaret Phillips in Fallen Angels July 30. . . Burgess Meredith, Eli Wallach and Glynis Johns to star in Major Barbara. . . Meg Wylie has replaced Rosamund Greenwood in The Matchmaker. . . Actors Equity has agreed to allow 5 members of London cast of Separate Tables to portray their roles in NY production due Oct 25 at Music Box. . . Professional Children's School will move to 132 W 60, NYC. . . Nathaniel Buchwald, drama critic of the Yiddish daily Morning Freiheit, died at age 65.

### Other Broadways

Guy Lombardo's production of ShowBoat will tour this fall. . . NY company of Teahouse of August Moon ended its tour in Washington, D. C. after a total NY and tour run of 1160 performances. . . Romance in Rio, a musical in Spanish and English sponsored by the Inter-American Theatre, will be presented in Mexico City. . . NJ Gov Meyner signed a bill that permits minors to work in summer theatres. . . 30 from Columbus, Ohio, went on first overseas theatre junket sponsored by Columbus Citizen.

### Summer Playhouses

Grand Theatre, Bristol, Pa, will not open as scheduled. . . Old Forge, Pa. Playhouse opened with Wedding Breakfast. . . The Eleventh Hour, a drama about Woodrow Wilson, plays thru July 21 at Staunton, Va. . . The Spa, a possible Broadway entry, will tryout on summer circuit. Cast includes Violet Heming, Gloria Vanderbilt, Paula Lawrence. . . All on a Summer Day will debut July 30 at Saratoga, NY, Theatre. . . Dean Murphy has replaced Morey Amsterdam in Aquashow.

### Legal Dept

A copyright infringement charge has been launched against the 1944 Broadway musical Bloomer Girl by Ruth Morris who claims show was based on play written by her in 1936. . . Jules Pfeiffer will try to halt film release of Bus Stop to Jan 1957, he opens a touring company of show in Chicago in August.

### Vaudeville

Rae Harrison, Cy Reeves, Martin Bros, Mage and Kerr head new Palace bill.

### Theatre Book Notes

Eartha Kitt's autobiography "Thursday's Child" to be published by Duell, Sloan & Pearce in Oct.



GREEN  
ROOM  
DEPARTMENT

**CRITICS CRITICIZED...** Congress of the International P. E. N. in London panned critics in their discussion of the role of the reviewer. Robert Henriques told the 700 writers present that the critic only understands himself and time will show that he is always wrong. Mario Praz of Italy noted that the new criticism often gives the impression of a mountain producing a mouse. Denis Saurat of France added that there are only journalists and historians, the public is the critic. Critic V.S. Pritchett defended his craft explaining that the duty and responsibility of the critic is to literature, not the public.

**COLUMN TIPS...** Tennessee Williams refused to launder his scripts for TV, reports Wilson... Stratford, Conn, Shakespeare Festival still trying to land Katharine Hepburn for Taming of the Shrew, hears Walker.

**COHAN STATUE...** Herald Tribune editorial agrees with Park Dept that the place for a statue of George M. Cohan is right in the middle of Broadway. Broadway can use a touch of greenery to take the edge off some of its garishness, and the revamping of Duffy Square with the new statue will provide it.

**DRAMA MAIL BOX...** Inspite of fine critical reception no Broadway producer has offered to present O'Casey's I Knock at the Door and Pictures in the Hallway, reports Staats Cotsworth, a member of the cast, in a Variety letter... With so many groups busy producing Shakespeare this summer, a C. D. subscriber finds it a pity that one or two of the lesser viewed works is not being presented.

**CRITICAL THOUGHTS...** The 1956-57 season will be even bigger and better than its predecessor, predicts Coleman, Mirror... A major reason for the failure of repertory has been the unrealistic assumption that the theatre's chief business is to keep its actors happy, states Kerr, Herald Tribune... A younger leading man could have chased Jo Sullivan about the stage of Most Happy Fella without calling for an understudy to go on matinees, as Robert Weede did, bets McHarry, News.



PROS & CONS BY TMK

As the theatre booking jam looms again, one can only wonder why some enterprising builder does not put a legit theatre in his new structure. Certainly the first builder brave enough to build that first NY theatre in 20 years will have it booked solidly for years to come.

Lower ticket prices might, but probably won't, result if the 3 Off Broadway producers who will present Broadway shows next season remember the struggles of their earlier days downtown. They were able to make their small playhouses successful mainly because they presented good shows at reasonable prices. This same formula could work on Broadway if given half a chance.



# OFF BROADWAY

Three Off Broadway producer groups will move to Broadway next fall. Circle in the Square producers have won the rights to O'Neill's Long Day's Journey into Night. They will present this at an uptown house while The Iceman Cometh continues at the Sheridan Square playhouse. Performances of the former will start at 7 30 PM also. David Ross, 4th St Theatre producer, will present Brendan Behan's The Quare Fellow on Broadway. He has just flown to London for the July 24 opening of the Irish play. Stanley Chase and Carmen Capalbo, producers of Three Penny Opera, have leased the Bijou for a season of dramas.

Alexander Clark replaced Clarence Derwent in Uncle Vanya. . . Louis Guss has replaced Gene Miller in The Man With the Golden Arm. . . Norman Mackaye replaced Robert Caesar in By Hex. . . Bella, a modern version of Strindberg's Kamraterna now playing at Royal 62 E 4.

Mr. Candido will be presented at Greenwich Mews Oct 8. Play has been presented on TV as "The Little Screw-Ball" and played at Westport, Conn, Theatre in 1951 under latter title.

Hotel Excelsion by Hans Holzer has moved its opening date at Provincetown forward to August 1. Call of Duty continues thru July 29. . . Taming of the Shrew will play Thursdays and Fridays at East River Park Amphitheater from July 27 to Aug 17, East River Drive at Grand St.

3 Chekhov Comedies presented by Contemporary Theatre, 15-2nd Ave, were praised by Frank, Womens Wear as rewarding thanks to imaginative direction and the cast's intelligent grasp of their roles.

# THEATRE

## BOOK

### COMMENTS



"The Dramatic Imagination" by Robert Edmond Jones published in a new Edition by Theatre Arts Books was labeled one of the golden books of the theatre by Atkinson, Times. The new edition contains an affectionate and illuminating preface by John Mason Brown. The book contains the essence of Jones' spirit.

# THEATRE

## RECORD

### COMMENTS

New Faces of 1956 (RCA Victor) has been aided by judicious editing, noted Variety reviewer. Some of the stuff is on the precious side but, overall the numbers have originality and dash.

"The King and I" film sound-track disc (Capitol) was recommended by Variety. Marni Nixon, who does the singing in the film for Deborah Kerr, brings a charm and gaiety to her songs, rates reviewer.

# FOR STAGE STRUCK ONLY



\* Keep fully informed of NYC theatre scene the easy way.

\* Weekly newsletter digests all theatre news, comments, reviews, published in NYC press. Plus complete business, ticket data.

\* \$25 year, \$6.50 quarter

CRITICAL DIGEST, 139 E 47, EL 5-6894

